

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 AID-20 PC-10 SCCT-02 NEA-10

OPR-02 DRC-01 /125 W

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O P 111750Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4929

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 0973

E.O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PINT, ES

SUBJECT: ELECTION RESULTS

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. EL SALVADOR CELEBRATED ITS LEGISLATIVE/MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MARCH 10 IN A GENERALLY CALM AND ORDERLY FASHION. IN SAN SALVADOR,

CCE DECISION TO RESTRICT POLLING PLACES TO ONLY THREE LOCATIONS AND CONCENTRATING AT LEAST 70 PERCENT OF THE BOOTHS AT THE INTERNATIONAL FAIR GROUNDS PRODUCED HEAVY TRAFFIC JAMS; HOWEVER, VOTING PROCESS APPEARED TO GO SMOOTHLY. DURING THE DAY, MEDIA CARRIED STATEMENTS FROM PRESIDENT MOLINA AND OTHERS ASSURING POPULACE THAT ORDER WOULD BE MAINTAINED AND URGING ALL TO VOTE. (PERHAPS IN AN EFFORT TO SHOW GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF SITUATION IN VIEW OF RECENT TERRORIST INCIDENTS, FAS JET TRAINERS FROM ISRAEL CRISS-CROSSED THE CAPITAL FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS MORNING OF MARCH 9.)

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2. EVENING OF MARCH 10, CCE BEGAN ISSUING "UNOFFICIAL" RESULTS

FROM INDIVIDUAL POLLING BOOTHS AROUND COUNTRY. THESE CEASED ABOUT MIDNIGHT, HOWEVER, AND HAVE NOT BEEN RENEWED. CCE SOURCES CLAIM VOTE RECOUNT IS GOING "VERY SLOWLY" AND STATE THAT NO OFFICIAL RESULTS CAN BE EXPECTED UNTIL LATER AFTERNOON OF MARCH 11 AT THE EARLIEST.

3. NEWSPAPERS ESTIMATE THAT IN LEGISLATIVE RACE, PCN WON 32 SEATS, UNO 14, PPS 4 AND FUDI 2. THEY ALSO LIST UNO AS WINNER IN SAN SALVADOR MUNICIPAL RACE WHICH UNO ALSO CLAIMS. NEITHER CCE NOR OPPOSITION PARTIES CREDIT PAPERS WITH MUCH ACCURACY IN THEIR ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES. PDC SOURCES ESTIMATE THAT UNO WON (OR WILL BE ALLOWED TO WIN) PERHAPS 12-14 SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY, PPS ONE OR TWO AND FUDI PERHAPS 2 IN AHUACHAPAN. IN ANY CASE, THEY DOUBT THAT GOVERNMENT WILL PERMIT THE COMBINED OPPOSITION TO DEPRIVE IT OF THE ITS TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OF THE ASSEMBLY SEATS. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE PCN SOURCE CLAIMS THINGS DID NOT GO AS WELL AS EXPECTED FOR THE OFFICIAL PARTY AND INDEED, IT MAY NOT HAVE WON MORE THAN 32 SEATS IN AN HONEST COUNT.

4. PDC SOURCES ADMIT THAT SECURITY FORCES BY AND LARGE STAYED OUT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS THIS YEAR. (NATIONAL GUARD WAS VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE AROUND SAN SALVADOR VOTING AREAS BUT DID NOT APPEAR TO BE INTERFERING IN ANY WAY.) HOWEVER, THEY CLAIM MANY CASES OF "CIVIL FRAUD" ESPECIALLY IN INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH UNO POLL WATCHERS WERE BARRED FROM THE POLLING PLACES, VOTERS WERE HANDED BALLOTS ALREADY MARKED FOR THE PCN OR WERE KEPT FROM MARKING THEIR BALLOTS ALREADY MARKED FOR THE PCN OR WERE KEPT FROM MARKING THEIR BALLOTS SECRETLY. ETC. THEY ALSO QUESTION THE FINAL VOTE COUNT IN SOME TOWNS CITING ONE CASE IN WHICH THE TALLY WAS ALLEGEDLY 12,000 FOR PCN AND 0 FOR UNO AND ANOTHER OF 8,000 TO 2. THEY ALSO CONTEND THAT IN SANTA ANA, WHERE THE CCE RULED OUT THEIR MUNICIPAL SLATE, THE UNO MUNICIPAL VOTE (NULL BALLOTS) OUTNUMBERED THE PCN VOTE TWO TO ONE EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE NO REGISTERED CANDIDATE. UNO STATES IT WILL PUBLISH A LIST OF THOSE MUNICIPALITIES WHERE IT CLAIMS PCN RIGGED VOTE OR COERCED VOTERS.

5. FORMER UNO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DUARTE, AFTER DEPOSITING BALLOT, PROMPTLY LEFT FOR CARACAS. SAID ONE PDC LEADER, "IN CASE THERE'S A COUP ATTEMPT, HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED."
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HOWEVER, SITUATION REMAINS CALM AND IT IS UNLIKELY OPPOSITION WILL DO MORE THAN LOUDLY PROTEST ALLEGED FRAUD.
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NNN

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